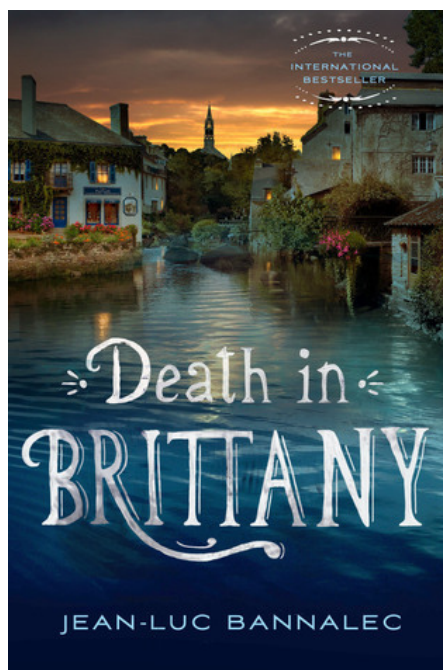




Death in Brittany

Jean-Luc Bannalec

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At the Central Hotel in Pont-Aven, Brittany, ninety-one-year-old manager Pierre-Louis Pennec is found murdered. Commissaire Georges Dupin and his team take on the investigation and narrow the list of suspects down to five people, including a rising political star, a longtime friend of the victim and a wealthy art historian. Further incidents – first a break-in, then another mysterious death – muddy the waters yet more. As Commissaire Dupin delves further and further into the lives of the victim and the suspects, he uncovers a web of secrecy and silence that belies the village's idyllic image.

A summer hit in its original German, Death in Pont-Aven introduces readers to the enigmatic Commissaire Dupin, an idiosyncratic penguin lover and Parisian-born caffeine junkie whose unique methods of detection raise more than a few eyebrows. It is a book so atmospheric readers will immediately want to wander through the village's narrow alleyways, breathe in the Atlantic air and savour Brittany's seaside specialty dishes. Death in Pont-Aven is a spellbinding, subtle and smart crime novel, peppered with cryptic humour and surprising twists.

Death in Brittany Details

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Author : Jean-Luc Bannalec

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From Reader Review Death in Brittany for online ebook

Georg says

Ist schon seltsam, wenn ein deutscher Lektor und (Mit-)Herausgeber einer Literaturzeitschrift unter falschem (französischen) Namen einen Krimi veröffentlicht, der in der Bretagne spielt. Um glaubwürdig zu erscheinen, baut er eine Menge sprachlicher Schnitzer ein, so als kenne er nicht einmal den Unterschied zwischen Adjektiven und Adverbien.

Beispiele (unvollständige Auswahl):

„... ist uns etwas Stupendes gelungen.“ (1646 [zitiert nach Kindle-Positionene])
„... penible Frisur“ (2740)
„... ist mir unrecht“ (2988)
„... hatte sich mit Rüstigkeit umgedreht.“ (3050)
„... funktionelle Klingel“ (3184)
„... hanebüchene Geschichte“ (3335)
„... misslaunig“ (2872)

(Den Hinweis auf die aufdringliche Sparsamkeit in Hinblick auf Satzzeichen setze ich nur in Klammern.)

Also vielleicht doch keine Lektor? Doch kein Deutscher?

Der Plot ist ziemlich billig. Ein alter Mann stirbt, kurz bevor er sein Testament ändern kann. Also haben alle Mitglieder der zahlreichen Erbgemeinschaft ein offensichtliches Motiv. Nichts Verschachteltes, nichts Überraschendes, kein doppelter Boden. Die Dialoge kennt man vom ZDF, Freitags, 20:15 Uhr.

Und Mr Dupin selbst? Den hätte ich auch strafversetzt. Kein Kommunikator, kein Teamspieler, ein eindimensionaler Unsympath. Hat einfach Glück, dass die, die er sofort ins Herz schließt, dann doch unschuldig sind.

Interessant sind die Kindle-Markierungen. Nur die Stellen werden markiert, in denen es konkrete und handfeste Restauranttipps gibt (leider ohne Preisangaben und Öffnungszeiten).

Tuck says

i guess like all bestsellers, inherently? they appeal to low level reading, and this being an international bestseller, it is universally poor plot, characters, sense of place? anyway, a police procedural set in small towns on coast of nw france...our detective is a renegade but gets down to business in his own way. for better atmospherics, local scenes, and deeper thinkers in detection i like camilleri's books set in sicily Game of Mirrors ; dibdin's in naples Game of Mirrors ; mcilvanney in glasgow Game of Mirrors life's too short to be reading bestsellers?

Kathy says

More like 4.5 stars for me

I was fortunate in waiting for available copy of this book that I could also check out the second of this series at the same time. The third I was able to place on hold. I do love finding a new and very interesting police investigator (Commissaire Dupin) who does his own thing in his own way in his own time. A fourth book in the series will come out in Spring 2019. There is also a German television series already made and can be viewed on you tube. How's your German? The author is German, a surprise to me after I googled the pseudonym. He apparently lives part time in Brittany as well as Germany (or so says the internet).

Having read the book I now want to travel asap to Brittany. The scenery as well as the villages and even the food scene are described wonderfully in this book. This is a thinking policeman who likes/needs to walk to allow the puzzle pieces to fit together in his analysis. He is given so little information arriving on the scene of a murder in a hotel dining room. It is the body of a 91-year old hotelier, brutally stabbed. His methods include locking up the scene of the crime and keeping it intact for as long as he wishes while interviews and fact gathering proceeds.

Very rich art history in the area plays a major role in this crime. Gauguin's work and love of the people and the area are well known. I must admit to loving his depiction of Breton girls in their white bonnets and have a print recently purchased that needs framing. The Chicago Art Institute recently held a rich exhibition of Gauguin's varied works.

So...we have Brittany, scenes of rivers and sea, quaint villages, art history and greed to uncover. Excellent read!

sample from book to give you idea of descriptive text:

"The landscape became more and more enchanting as the narrow little streets at the edge of Pont-Aven gave way to thick woodland. The trees were dripping with mistletoe and ivy, overgrown and moss-covered. Some of the trees here had entwined as they grew, forming a long dark green tunnel. Now and then the Aven shimmered between the trees on the left hand side as though it were electrically charged, a pale silver colour. The last of the day's light bathed everything in its glow, lending the landscape even more of a fairytale atmosphere. By now, Dupin knew this landscape and this atmosphere very well....He always thought that if you were to meet a dwarf or an elf or some other mythical creature in this kind of light, you wouldn't even bat an eyelid."

Lesa says

Ready for an atmospheric, traditional police procedural? Jean-Luc Bannalec's Death in Brittany was a bestseller for many months in Germany after its 2012 publication there. It's not a fast-paced thriller, though, so it won't make the bestseller lists here. It's for those of us who appreciate a thoughtful police officer and the slow unraveling of a crime. In addition, there are the beautiful small towns of Brittany to entice a reader.

Commissaire Georges Dupin was banished from the Paris police force, sent to the remote Breton coast. However, he enjoys his mornings in Concarneau, sipping coffee at a waterfront cafe, away from the politics of Paris. But, the murder of a renowned ninety-one-year-old hotelier in nearby Pont-Aven threatens to thrust his latest case into the spotlight. Pont-Aven and the Central Hotel played host to Gauguin and other artists in the 19th century, building its reputation on the connection to the artists. Now, the death of Pierre-Louis Pennec throws the entire region in an uproar.

Dupin finds everyone shocked by the murder, but no one is particularly helpful when it comes to investigating the crime. And, a break-in at the crime scene only muddies the waters. It seems everyone associated with Pennec and the Central Hotel has a closely-guarded secret. It will take a few walks and a few cups of coffee for Dupin to dig through his thoughts for the truth.

Dupin, with his love of coffee, good food, and walks by the sea, is only slightly eccentric as a detective. His

biggest flaw is his inability to hold his tongue, so he tries to avoid conversations and confrontations with the higher ups. And, with the trace of humor in this book when it comes to Dupin, he acknowledges that. "He found it a bit sad, because he lacked some of the 'hidden depths' which now seemed a quasi-requirement for his profession: drug addiction, or at least alcoholism, neuroses or depression to a clinical degree, a colourful criminal past, corruption on an interesting scale or several dramatically failed marriages. He didn't have any of those things to show off about."

Spend a day or two with Dupin, walking the paths of small-town Brittany, exploring the cafes and side streets, while pondering the mysteries of murder, *Death in Brittany*. It's a charming quiet mystery that introduces a traditional police detective and a story that reaches into the past.

Raven says

If you're keen to discover some new French crime fiction, Jean-Luc Bannalec is a real find. *Death In Pont-Aven* introduces us to Commissaire Dupin, a cantankerous Parisian caffeine junkie, who polices the small Breton village of Pont-Aven, a sleepy community near the sea. Everyone knows everyone else and nothing much seems to happen. However, one morning he is dragged from his coffee and croissant to the scene of a murder at the local Central Hotel. The housekeeper has discovered the 91-year-old manager and owner Pierre-Louis Pennec dead on the restaurant floor.

The very occurrence of such a murder in such a place sends both Dupin and the local community into a state of shock and surprise. However, soon Dupin and his team come up with five viable suspects, including a rising political star, a wealthy art historian, and a long-time friend of the dead man. A mysterious break-in and then another suspicious death only deepen the mystery and as Dupin delves deeper into the lives of the victims and the suspects, he uncovers a web of secrecy, greed and silence at odds with the idyllic surrounds of Pont-Aven.

Bannalec has produced an incredibly character-driven piece, in common with his fellow French and Italian contemporaries. The curmudgeonly and self-deprecating Dupin is the real driving force throughout the book with his idiosyncratic nature, that are endlessly entertaining to the reader, and a source of deep frustration to his more straight-laced and by-the-book colleagues. Everyone knows the tropes of fictional police detectives, and Dupin wryly bemoans the absence of drug dependency, depression, neuroses and broken marriages in his own life. However, with his sharp tongue, cynical nature and a surprising fondness for penguins – yes, penguins! – he proves himself a colourful and interesting character throughout.

Obviously with the stark contrast between Dupin sophisticated background in Paris, and the very unique and fiercely independent spirit of the Bretons, there is ample opportunity for some earthy humour. Likewise, Bannalec captures perfectly the claustrophobic feel of this small town, but also paints a majestic picture of the overlapping communities both rural and shore-dwelling, and the contrasting lives and mind-sets of the two communities within Brittany.

Fuelled by murder, art forgeries, family resentments and scheming neighbours, the plot is engaging from the start. Injected with Bannalec's research into the links between the region and some France's greatest painters, the initial murder mystery is fleshed out and strengthened not only by the careful disguising of the real murderer by a series of red herrings, but by the carefully placed re-imagining of this former community of artists. Along with Dupin, I was completely wrong-footed throughout as potential suspects came to the fore, all with strong motives for their possible involvement in murder and theft.

Death in Pont-Aven is a smart and utterly entertaining read. It its centre is a wonderfully empathetic and

engaging detective whose wry humour, fixed ways and generally grumpy demeanour, drive the action and interest. His seemingly haphazard form of detection – constantly interrupted by coffee breaks – frustrate and bemuse both colleagues and potential suspects alike. Compounded by an intriguing and interesting murder plot that really brings the most pernicious aspects of this small community to the fore, it's a highly satisfying read.

Three says

da un certo punto in poi si dà per scontato che un certo quadro sia stato rubato, senza avere mai parlato di un furto fino a quel momento (c'era stato un dubbio, molte pagine prima), e non è un dettaglio, perché da lì viene tutta la storia. Sono cose che danno sui nervi: ci vuol tanto a rileggersi, o a farsi rileggere da un editor? A parte questo è un giallo onesto, che si legge volentieri anche se molte pagine sembrano più una guida turistica del Finistère che un libro

Elisa says

I received a free copy from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. Thank you, St. Martin's Press! The way this book describes the town of Pont-Aven and the whole region of Brittany and its ambiance is a delight. The characters are well developed and the mystery develops at a steady pace, leaving a great taste in the reader's mouth. The one problem with this book is that it will make you crave Commissaire Dupin's morning croissant. A wonderful read!

Maya says

"????????? ??????" ?? ???-??? ??????? ? ??????? ? ??????????????? ?????-??????, ?????? ?????????????? ?? ??????, ?????-???? ? ???-?????????????? ? ??????? ?????????? ?? ?? ??????? ????? ?? ?????????????????? ?? ??????. ?????????????????? ?? ?????????, ?? ??????? ????????? ??????? ?????? ? ?????????? ?? ??????, ??????, ??? ????? ???????, ?? ??????? ? ?????????? ?? ??? ? ?????????? ?? ????? - ??? ?????? ? ????? ??????????? ?? ?????, ????? ?? ??? ??????????.

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Masteatro says

Una muy agradable historia de detectives en el incomparable marco de la Bretaña francesa. El comisario Dupin consigue caer simpático al lector y con sus peculiares métodos resuelve un asesinato en un tranquilo pueblecito que el siglo pasado fue colonia de importantes pintores como Gaugin. Muy adecuada como lectura veraniega sea en la playa o en la montaña.

Cathy (cathepsut) says

An armchair mystery by a German author with a French pen name, possibly trying to re-create Maigret in Brittany. Pretty boring. We get a bunch of aimless interrogations/interviews, dialogues that consist of many repetitions, a lot of walking and driving around and a fairly uninspired criminal case. Around the middle the plots gets a bit more interesting, but there is a distinct lack of suspense. The solution to the mystery is just as lackluster and one of the pivotal moments towards the end plays out in the off. Not sure why this became a bestseller in Germany.

Marita says

Once famous for its mills and renowned as a village frequented by artists, Pont-Aven is now the scene of a grisly murder. Who would murder a ninety-one year old man, and why?

Commissaire Georges Dupin, formerly from Paris, is now based in nearby Concarneau and the case is his to solve. Fortunately Dupin has a good team who can do all the legwork and background inquiries as Dupin is very busy flitting about following up on his hunches. *“Dupin hadn’t expected anything else here; this wasn’t a case which would be solved by anything as banal as fingerprints, footprints, textile fibres or random eyewitnesses.”* Soon there is much more to the mystery than Pierre-Louis Pennec's demise. Art, money... And so he calls on the skills of Professor Marie Morgane Cassel, an art expert from Brest.

Author Jean-Luc Bannalec, born in Brest, Brittany, takes a gently humorous look at his fellow Bretons by presenting an outsider, a Parisian, as the main protagonist. Dupin has lived in the region for three years and has devoted time to learning about the local culture, but he knows that he will always be regarded as an outsider. Through his eyes we learn about Breton foibles, Breton food, Breton countryside and Breton superiority.

Watermill in Pont-Aven, by Paul Gauguin, 1894 (Wikipedia)

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Here is the description of one of the villages mentioned in the novel:

“Kerdruc was picturesquely situated where the flat hills along the Aven fell away; the streets wound right down to the river. Some beautiful old stone houses and even a few imposing villas

were scattered amongst the lush greenery. Palm trees, dwarf fan palms, larches, pines, lemon trees, rhododendrons, beeches, hydrangeas, high beech hedges, bamboos, cactii, laurels and bushy lavender shrubs all grew in wild profusion. The plants could not have been more typically Breton. Just like in Port Manech down by the mouth of the Aven, you felt like you were walking into a botanic garden. The Aven lay wide and majestic in the valley, halfway to the open sea.”

Sonia De la rosa says

Un libro de suspense entretenido y fácil de leer, con un protagonista, el comisario Dupin, carismático y algo gruñón. La trama no es muy rebuscada, y en ocasiones queda eclipsada por las descripciones de la región, la Bretaña, en donde sucede la historia.

Beatrix says

Eigentlich wollte ich diesen Krimi gleich lesen, als ich auch nur den Titel las. Habe schon lange nichts mehr gesehen, was in der Bretagne spielt. Und da ich die Gegend liebe und dort mal ein Jahr gelebt habe, sollte es doch ein leichtes sein mich von einem Regionalkrimi begeistern zu lassen. Dann kamen die ersten zweifelnden Stimmen und die Diskussion um die Identität des Autors verwirrte mich zunehmend. Meine Leselust nahm ab.

Doch dann hat mir eine liebe Seele ein unwiderstehliches Angebot gemacht und ein Exemplar auf den Weg nach Kanada geschickt. Und ich gelobte mir ganz unvoreingenommen an das Buch heranzugehen und vor allem der Geschichte erstmal eine Chance zu geben.

Und der Klappentext versprach schon mal eine gute Geschichte - und einen spannenden Krimi. Kommissar Dupin ist von Paris in die fernste Provinz in die Bretagne strafversetzt worden und hat sich dort überraschenderweise schnell eingelebt, auch wenn er von den Einheimischen nach nunmehr 3 Jahren natürlich immer noch wie ein Fremder behandelt wird. Im Pont Aven gilt es einen brutalen Mord an einen renommierten Hotelier aufzuklären. Verzwickte Familienverhältnisse und natürlich auch kunstgeschichtliche Hintergründe spielen bei der Lösung des Falles eine wichtige Rolle.

Leider war jedes Wohlwollen meinerseits gleich nach den ersten Seiten schon verspielt. Die ausführlichen Landschaftsbeschreibungen lesen sich einfach wie ein touristischer Werbeprospekt für die Bretagne und nicht mehr. Alle Klischees, die man sich denken kann, werden hier aufgeführt. Aber die eigentliche bretonische Stimmung kam gar nicht wirklich durch. Wie auch andere Kritiker anmerkten, ist von grantelnden, abweisenden Bretonen wie sie im Buch vorwiegend beschrieben werden, in der Wirklichkeit nicht viel zu sehen. Ich hab selten gastfreundlichere und lebenswürdigere Menschen kennen gelernt. Und war mehr als froh, dass ich nach einem Sommer an der Sorbonne zur Université de Haute Bretagne wechseln konnte!!!!

Manche Leser fühlen sich durch die vielen französisch-bretonischen Namen verwirrt. Ich war eher irritiert, da sie sich für mich eigentlich gar nicht bretonisch anhörten, im Gegenteil, ich vermisste regelrecht die typisch bretonischen Namen, an die ich mich über die Jahre so gewöhnt hatte. Der Autor hat statt dessen diese merkwürdige Eigenart nicht nur sein Pseudonym sondern auch einige seiner Figuren mit Ortsnamen zu belegen - bei Locmariaquer gruselte es mich jedes Mal. Da ist es wohl kein Wunder, dass auch Dupin nie

Lust hatte mit seinem Boss zu reden

Aber davon ganz abgesehen, hat mich der Krimi als solcher nicht überzeugen können. Die erste Hälfte verlief so schleppend, dass ich wiederholt ans Abbrechen dachte. Es passiert nichts, die Ermittlungen bestehen aus nicht viel mehr als langweiligen Gesprächen, die ich kaum Verhöre zu nennen wage.

Ich konnte auch nie wirklich mit dem Protagonisten warm werden. Kommissar Dupin bleibt eine eher leblose Figur für mich. Ich konnte aus den Beschreibungen des Autors nie wirklich verstehen, warum er so im Alleingang unterwegs ist - beruflich wie privat.

Erst als nach gut 150 Seiten (das halbe Buch ist schon durch!!!) eine Kunstexpertin als neue Figur auftritt, gewinnt der Plot mehr Fahrt und wird spannender. Der Kunsthintergrund rund um Gauguin und die Schule von Pont Aven war letztlich das einzige, was ich an dem ganzen Buch wirklich interessant finden konnte.

Letztlich kann ich mich nach dieser Lektüre nur denen anschließen, die stark zweifeln, dass der Autor in der Tat ein gebürtiger Bretone sei und eher einen Deutschen hinter dem Pseudonym vermuten.

Kaisu says

Hach, als Buch hätte ich die Geschichte wohl nicht zu Ende gelesen. Dafür wird mir zu oft die Liebe zur Bretagne wiederholt und sich zu wenig auf den Fall konzentriert. Als Hörbuch passt es.

Margarethe says

Pariser Kommissar ist in die Bretagne zwangsversetzt weil er seinen „Affekt“ nicht beherrschen kann. Nun lebt er seit drei Jahren dort und wird noch einige Generationen dort bleiben müssen um als nicht „neu“ eingestuft zu werden.

Der Kommissar wirkt grobschlächtig und ist koffeinabhängig etwas kauzig und einfach liebenswert.

Es gibt einen Fall zu lösen ein angesehener Hotelier wird erstochen in seinem Restaurant aufgefunden. Es gibt Familiengeheimnisse und die Bretagne zu entdecken.

Und irgendwann kommt der Punkt in dem Buch in dem man nicht mehr weiterlesen will, weil ja dann das Buch zu Ende ist – für mich immer ein gutes Zeichen.

Mit Hilfe des Kommissars wird der Leser in die Bretagne eingeführt, es gibt wunderbare Landschaftsbeschreibungen und liebenswerte Darstellungen, die die Bretonen dem Leser näher bringen. Wer noch nicht in der Bretagne war, wird es entdecken wollen. Die Leser, die dort schon sein durften werden sich danach sehnen bald wieder hinzufahren.

Das Buch hat alles was ich an einem Regio-Krimi schätze. Die Atmosphäre der Region, das Verständnis für die Einwohner und einen spannenden Fall in der Region eingebettet. Ich freue mich auf Neuigkeiten von Kommissar Dupin und kenne einige Leute, denen ich das Buch empfehlen werde.

Das Cover ist stimmig mit dem Buch und der Einband bzw. das Buch an sich liegt schön in der Hand.
